

# TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

## Utah Coal Regulatory Program

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December 23, 2003

TO: Internal File

THRU: Daron Haddock, Permit Supervisor

FROM: Jerriann Ernstsens, Ph.D., Environmental Scientist, Biology

RE: Minor Coal Exploration: Geotechnical Investigation, PacificCorp, Deer Creek Mine, C/015/0018, Task #1779

### **SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Energy West Mining Corporation submitted two plans: 1) Rilda Canyon facilities pad (task #1766) and 2) Geotechnical Exploration project (#1779) for the Rilda Canyon facilities project. The Division determined that the plan for the Rilda Canyon facilities pad was administratively incomplete (December 2003). The Environmental Resource Information section, for the Rilda Canyon facilities pad, was missing important information. A thorough technical review of the Rilda Canyon facilities pad (task #1766), therefore, was not possible.

The Geotechnical Exploration plan (#1779) refers to some of the same environmental resource information that DOGM considered unacceptable during the Administratively Completeness Review for the Rilda Canyon plan. It seems sensible that the same comments from DOGM about the environmental resource information for the Rilda Canyon facilities pad (task #1766) must also hold true for the Geotechnical Exploration plan (task #1779).

The Geotechnical Exploration plan (task #1779) is missing important information to formally review. Below are DOGM's comments that BLM should consider pertaining to information that the Permittee did include in the Geotechnical Exploration plan.

Page 7 refers to a recent archeological survey the Permittee conducted on adjacent properties. This survey did not include the site where the geotechnical exploration will occur. The Permittee must provide an archeological survey of the site where the actual surface disturbance will occur.

Pages 7/8 refer to habitat of unique or unusually high value. A large portion of the permit area contains deer and elk habitat (Vol. 4. Map 2-19 2001). Within the permit area is deer and

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elk high priority summer range. Also, the area is critical/high priority winter range with adjacent areas as high priority summer range for elk. The Permittee states that there will be no detrimental impact to these species or their habitat. The Division, in coordination with DWR, reminds the Permittee that the project site in Rilda Canyon is closed from December 1<sup>st</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>. This closure period is still in effect. DWR has files showing at least two letters concerning Rilda Canyon that reminded Energy West of the seasonal closure dates in the past (DWR e-communications, 12222003).

Page 10 lists the seed mixture for riparian areas, which contains yellow sweetclover. The Permittee must omit this non-native species from the list. The Division recommends bringing the total seed rate at least up to 80 PLS/square foot by increasing the remaining species or adding additional Utah native species.

Information on vegetation resources, springs/seeps, TES are not administratively complete. The Division, therefore, cannot provide a thorough review of the operation and reclamation plans.